

Taunton 1792

Foster — Taunton

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Mr. *Adams's*
S E R M O N
AT THE
I N S T A L L A T I O N
OF THE
Rev. Mr. *Foster.*



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Mr. Adams
S. E. R. M. O. N.
THE
INSTITUTION



Rev. Mr. [illegible]

1222
THE DUTY OF MINISTERS GIVING THEMSELVES
WHOLLY TO THEIR WORK; REPRESENTED IN

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S E R M O N

P R E A C H E D May 16th, 1792.

A T T H E

I N S T A L L A T I O N

O F T H E

REV. Mr. JOHN FOSTER.

O V E R T H E

CHURCH, AND FIRST CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY

I N T A U N T O N ,

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.



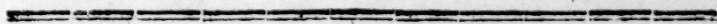
By ZABDIEL ADAMS, A. M.

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN LUNENBURGH.



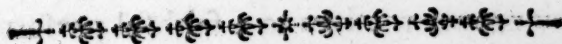
TO WHICH ARE ADDED THE CHARGE AND
RIGHT-HAND OF FELLOWSHIP,

BY THE REVEREND DOCTORS
HOWARD AND LATHROP, OF BOSTON.



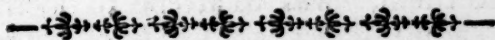
BOSTON: PRINTED BY T. & J. FLEET, 1792.





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INSTALLATION SERMON.



xii ROMANS, part of 7th and 8th verses.

— OR HE THAT TEACHETH ON TEACHING;
OR HE THAT EXHORTETH ON EXHORTATION. —

CHRIST having gathered a Church in the world took care before he left it, to appoint an order of men whose business it should be, *to feed the flock of God which he had purchased with his own blood. He gave some Apostles, some Prophets, some Evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.* Some of these officers, designed to supply the peculiar exigencies of the Church in its infancy, were clothed with extraordinary powers, which were to cease when those necessities ceased; and the others, vested with ordinary powers only, were to remain to the end of the world. Of this latter kind are *pastors and teachers*, whose business is to *teach and exhort*; to instruct mankind in their duty, and urge them

them by proper motives to a faithful performance of it. So long therefore as ignorance and vice remain in the world, their office will be necessary.

WHETHER *Pastor* and *Teacher* were, at first, distinct officers in the Church, is not certain. The first settlers of this country thought they were, and accordingly in some churches there were both *Pastor* and *Teacher*; the business of the latter, according to them, "was to attend to doctrine, and therein to administer a word of knowledge;" and of the former, "to attend to exhortation and therein to administer a word of wisdom." This distinction, which is mentioned in the Cambridge Platform, seems to be countenanced by that passage in Ephesians just now quoted. But if they were originally distinct, in process of time they were united without inconvenience; excepting the same person is not commonly so well gifted both to teach and exhort. The talents are various, and to excel in both is uncommon. Sometimes there is a rare union of both gifts in one man; happy for that church which possesses a minister of such accomplishments.

THE Apostle having in the beginning of this chapter treated of some general duties of the moral kind, begins at the third verse to mention those duties that are peculiar to the different officers of the Church; and in my text not only mentions the special duties of Ministers, but exhorts to a steady attendance on them. *Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering, or he that teacheth on teaching, or he that exhorteth on exhortation.* From which passage the following observation arises; that teaching and exhortation are important parts of a minister's office-work; and that it is his duty closely to attend

attend to this work. Under this general observation it is natural to enquire first *what*, and secondly *how* they are to teach. To the first enquiry the answer is in general, that they are to teach the truths of divine revelation. Hence the direction to Timothy is, *preach the word*. Many important particulars are comprehended under the general term *word*; which it will be unprofitable for me to enumerate, for it must ultimately be left to every particular minister's judgment what are the true doctrines of scripture and what not. They are not obliged to subscribe to the creeds or formulas of men the most renowned for piety or learning. *Call no man master on earth; for one is your master even Christ*. However it is the duty of ministers to teach men *the way of salvation*. The method of salvation is pointed out in the gospel. This they must study with the utmost attention, that they may represent the truths of it in a proper light, and not mislead men in a matter of such infinite importance. This teaching the truths of God's word, implies that they do not make any thing foreign to that, the matter of their instruction. They are not to spin their divinity as the spider does his web, out of their own bowels. Neither are they to teach their own experiences, nor for doctrines the commandments of men. Neither systems of politicks, nor philosophy should be communicated from the pulpit, except incidentally, or on particular occasions, and with a view to illustrate some point of theology, or moral practice.

As the truths of God's word are to be the subject matter of Ministers public instruction, they should form their sentiments of it, not from the writings

writings of fallible men, but from an attentive examination of the Bible itself. They should drink at the fountain head, where the water is pure and unmixed ; and happy are they if they can examine the Sacred Code in the languages in which it was originally written. Their appeal should always be to the scriptures. By that standard should they measure their sentiments, and govern their preaching. *To the law and to the testimony, if any man speak not according to that word, it is because there is no light in him.* To make use of human helps to gain a necessary insight into the word of God, is wise and proper ; but to form our conceptions of the truths and doctrines of revelation from the representations of fallible men, and not from an immediate study of the word itself, is highly absurd. To bring prejudiced minds, and preconceived opinions to the examination of the Bible, is to treat it with contempt. He that settles his opinions of the doctrines of revelation previously to his coming to an attentive perusal of it, from tradition and the creeds of other men, must come to its study under great disadvantages. His mind being biassed, his endeavour will be, not to *know the truth as it is in Jesus* ; but to pick out some loose and detached passages to countenance his preconceived, and too incautiously imbibed sentiments. In this case he will *wrest* and *torture* scripture to make it speak a language foreign to its true intentment and general scope ; whereas if he brings to the study of the bible a candid and unprejudiced mind, ever open to conviction ; if he compare one passage with another ; and consider it as its own best interpreter, and make it thus studied, the only test of religious truths, his former mistakes imbibed in youth, by the force of juvenile education,

education, will be corrected; he will know the truth and *the truth shall make him free* from lust and passion, from error, bigotry and nonsense, of which there is abundance at present among some modern dogmatists.

HAVING shewn what ministers are to teach, my next business is to point out *in what manner* this instruction is to be communicated.

1st. PUBLICLY. It is allowed by all that it is a part of their duty *to stand in the top of high places, and from thence unto men to call, and their voice is to be to the sons of men.* The subject matter of their teaching is of universal concern; men of all ranks and conditions are interested in their messages, and are bound to put themselves in the way to hear them. A great part of a teacher's business lies in the pulpit. But we are told that he must be *instant in season and out of season.* He must communicate private instructions as well as public ones; for there are some special opportunities in which private applications, both by way of *teaching and exhortation*, may be of eminent service. Private instructions have many advantages above public ones. In the latter we are more apt to attend to the *manner* than to the *matter.* We view them rather as exhibitions of the preacher's skill in *composition and oratory*, than as discourses designed to correct the temper and meliorate the heart. But in private instructions, no accurate harangue is expected, the curiosity of the hearer is not excited, nor his attention kept awake to make critical remarks on the skill and ingenuity of the speaker, but only to gain useful information when conveyed in a decent undress. Besides, private

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teachings

teachings may be brought down to a level with the lowest capacities. If any questions arise they may be proposed; if any doubts they may be solved; if any obscurities they may be explained; of all which pulpit discourses (according to the present mode) are incapable. Farther, they have a greater tendency to the reformation of wicked persons, than those teachings or exhortations which are delivered publickly. Reproofs of sin delivered from the desk, are commonly, and indeed ought always to be general. To make them *personal* raises prejudices against the preacher, bars the mind against the entrance of wholesome reproof, and makes the offender an enemy to the speaker, not merely because *he tells him the truth*, but because he does it in an unsuitable place, in the face of the assembly, and thus exposes him to be pointed at by the finger of scorn.

It is a *trite* but a *just observation*, that ministers should preach *to*, but not *at*, their people. The first they take well, the latter they cannot brook. For these reasons public teachings and exhortations should be general, though on this account they are not so influential on the hearts of individuals; for such is the nature of men that they shift from themselves and apply to their neighbours all unpleasing documents, which from their general nature are capable of such application. But what they will not bear in public, they oftentimes take in good part when privately and charitably administered. When men are alone, they will oftentimes hear their own faults without resentment, because there are no witnesses of their shame. In private we may search the wound to the bottom, use the incision knife and the caustick, and work an
immediate

immediate and radical cure ; may say, as Nathan did to David *thou art the man*. Thus conviction may be fastened on the Sinner's mind, and great good done to his soul.

BESIDES, if some persons are not taught privately they cannot be taught at all, for it is rarely, if ever that they are found in the house of God. Ministers should follow them to their private dwellings, and communicate those instructions and reproofs which tend to alarm their consciences and put them on a serious consideration of their ways.

LASTLY, This private teaching and exhortation has a mighty tendency to give the loose and careless part of mankind a favourable opinion of Ministers, against whom in general, they are apt to be prejudiced, as thinking they are designing men, who make a shew of godliness merely for worldly gain. But when they observe that they maintain a consistent character, that they are uniform, are serious *out of*, as well as *in* the pulpit, pursuing the same pious ends by their private communications, as by their public teachings, it will disarm them of their prejudices, and give them a favourable opinion of their sincerity and goodness. And when they see persons of confessed natural abilities, and of superior accomplishments to themselves, apparently pious believers of the christian religion, it will take away some of their strongest objections to the truth of the gospel, and make them seriously suspect whether they are not mistaken in their apprehensions that the Bible is only a *cunningly devised fable*.

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Now, since *so many and such great advantages* are likely to attend the private teachings and exhortations of Ministers, it must be evident that they are obliged to imitate the example of St. Paul in this respect, who tells us that he taught not only *publickly, but from house to house*:

3dly, THEY must teach with all perspicuity.

WHEN we consider that persons of all ages, educations and advantages attend their ministrations, of this there can be no doubt. They have it in their commission to feed *Christ's Lambs, as well as his Sheep*; and though *the old will bear strong meat, yet the young must be fed with the sincere milk of the word that they may grow thereby*. It becomes public teachers to *choose out acceptable words*; to adopt such language in which to convey their ideas as is intelligible, but not grovelling, easy but not vulgar. Some persons soar above the comprehension of the bulk of their hearers, by using *scientifick and technical* terms, to which their ears have not been accustomed, and to which they can affix no ideas. Such preaching must be, to the bulk of the Auditors, usefess. *Elegance* is one thing, and *bombast* another. We should regard the Apostle Paul in this matter, who says, *except we utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken; we shall speak into the air*. Wherefore he concludes for himself that he had rather *speak five words with his understanding, that he might teach others also, than five thousand words in an unknown tongue*.

ANOTHER thing necessary to perspicuity, is to observe a due method in preaching. *Order* is the beauty of the creation. It is pleasing to the eye,
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the ear, the understanding. *Order* helps the memory, and enables the hearer to carry away the truths for practical improvement. The good teacher having selected a text, will first explain its meaning, and then raise such observations as naturally arise; then he will speak to them in a regular order, that so his hearers may go away not confounded with an incoherent jumble of words, unnaturally coupled together; but with the satisfaction of finding the great truths of the Bible (which for divers reasons are now scattered up and down in no regular method) collected into an orderly series and reduced to their proper heads.

AGAIN, the good teacher will be careful to select his discourses in such manner as to suit the particular circumstances of his people. If iniquity is more than commonly prevalent, *he will lift up his voice as a trumpet and teach the people of his charge their sins and transgressions.* If a time of calamity and distress, he will speak a word in season unto them, *and words fitly spoken how good are they?* Thus adapting his discourses both public and private to the circumstances of his people, he will comfort the sorrowful, enlighten the ignorant, confirm the doubtful, succor the tempted, divest the presumptuous of his false hopes, and endeavour to lead all to *Christ who is the only hope set before them.* To do this, he will preach both the doctrines and duties of the gospel. *He will keep back nothing that is profitable; will preach repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, and shun not to declare the whole counsel of God.* These things, says St. Paul to Titus, *I will that thou affirm constantly, that they who have believed in God, be careful to maintain good works.*

LASTLY

LASTLY, Ministers should teach by their example. The virtues they recommend to others should be exemplified in their own deportment; and the doctrines they preach they should live. This is a matter of very great importance, and hence St. Paul exhorted Timothy *to be an example to the believer, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith and in purity.*

I come now to the other part of a Minister's duty. *He that exhorteth on exhortation.* Ministers must first instruct men in their duty, and then by the most persuasive motives urge them to the practice of it. Exhortation is an encouragement which ministers set before their people to excite them to perform difficult duties, and support them under various temptations. Under this term are comprehended, *reproofs, rebukes*, and whatever has a tendency to answer these valuable ends. In religion there must be no force or violence. The only way to compel men to come in to the gospel feast, is to use reason and exhortation with them. Persecution should never be practised. None were ever made wiser or better by fire or faggot. The *inquisition* will not make an heretick orthodox; nor will the burning of the sinner's body purify his soul. *Spiritual* and not carnal weapons are to be used in the *pulling down the strong holds of Satan.* Ministers must exhort, but may not persecute. *Their power is for edification but not for destruction. Christ's kingdom is not of this world,* neither are his ministers preceded by *Lictors* who carry *axes and bundles of rods* to enforce obedience to his commands. Obedience must be free, the effect of choice, to influence which, reason and persuasion can alone avail. No other weapons can touch
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the conscience or reach the heart. This premised, I shall enquire into the sources of exhortation. There are two general ones, the *beauty of virtue* and the inestimable rewards which God has promised to it ; and on the other hand the *deformity of vice*, and the eternal punishments which he will certainly inflict on those who die in a state of impenitency. These are the topicks of exhortation. Such is the nature of man that he loves happiness and dreads misery. This love and hatred then are to be immediately addressed in our exhortations. And according to the prevalence of the one or the other of these contrary passions in men, we are to regulate ourselves in this part of our ministerial function. Promises are best suited to operate on some, and threatnings on others. *John the Baptist*, having an hard-hearted and perverse generation to deal with, exhorted them principally by an alarming address to their fears, he breathed out threatnings, and denounced the terrors of the Lord against those hardened sons of iniquity, to excite them to flee from the wrath to come. *Behold, says he, the ax is laid unto the root of the tree ; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.* Again, *whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor and gather his wheat into his garner, but the chaff will be burn with unquenchable fire.* The preaching of *Jesus Christ* was somewhat different. Grace more commonly sat on his lips ; *he went about doing good, forgiving sins, and preaching the glad tidings of peace.* However, when there was occasion, by having to deal with persons of a rebellious disposition, he assumed a different tone, and hurled the thunder bolts of an incensed God. From these instances

instances we learn in what manner Ministers can best acquit themselves of this duty. They must be very attentive to the different characters of men, and regulate their exhortations accordingly. Before obstinate sinners, the terrors of the Law, and the threatenings of the Gospel must be denounced. The dreadful consequences of their sins must be represented to them in the fullest manner. The *horrors of Hell* and the *pains of the damned* must be depicted to their view, in the brightest and most striking colours, in order to arouse them from their security and stop them in their mad career. In dealing with such kind of sinners, Ministers should be clothed with the zeal of *Phinebas*, not to transfix them with the sword of justice, but with *the sword of the spirit, the word of God, which is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit*. Such should be told the pernicious consequences of their sins, even in this world; that *health, peace and reputation* are lost; and *pain, sickness and premature death* are produced by the means thereof. Also they should be alarmed by the evils which await them in a future state, *in the dreary abodes of the damned*, where light shall never enter, and from whence even hope itself, the only consolation of the miserable, is forever excluded. However, though a Minister ought to manifest great zeal in his exhortations to abandoned sinners; yet he should never suffer any reproachful expressions to escape his lips. The example of our Saviour, in calling the Pharisees, *hypocrites, generation of vipers, &c.* will not authorize them in doing so. There is always a deference due even to *great sinners*. Therefore we should be careful that we do not *outrage or unnecessarily affront*

affront them. There is a *spirit of resentment* which ought never to be excited, if we mean to do them good by our exhortations.

AGAIN, have ministers to deal with weak and timid sinners, who love their duty and yet neglect it, and to whom sin is in a degree a grief and burthen? they should take them by the hand and lead them to the foot of the cross; represent to them the love of God in sending, and of Christ in dying for them, to purchase pardon and eternal life; and then ask them how they can offend so *benevolent* a Saviour; how they can *crucify the son of God afresh, and put him to open shame*? This view will penetrate their hearts with lively grief; and the *love of Christ* thus displayed will *constrain them no more to live to themselves, but to him who loved them, died for them, and rose again*. Have they to deal with good men who begin to relax in their obedience; to grow weary and faint in their minds? They should encourage them to *lift up the hands that hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees*; to consider the greatness of that happiness which is reserved in heaven for such as persevere till death. If they think their trials greater than those of other men, they must be exhorted to be *steadfast*, knowing that as they are *partakers of the sufferings, so shall they be also of the consolation*. They must be pointed to the noble army of martyrs, who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; and are now before the throne of God, serving him day and night. They must be exhorted to look to *Jesus the author and finisher of their faith*, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God; and that in due time they shall reap if they faint not.

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LASTLY.

* LASTLY. To be successful in the business of exhortation, a minister must make himself beloved by his people. This may not always be in his power. But he should endeavour by the exemplification of every christian grace, particularly, charity, meekness and patience, to gain their affections. He should make it evident to the persons he exhorts, that he does it from a sense of duty and charity to their souls. It was thus St. Paul conducted : *My little children of whom I travel in birth till Christ be formed in you.* With what a friendly compellation does he urge the Romans, in the beginning of the chapter of my text ? *I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.* And in another place ; *though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin you that which is convenient, yet for love's sake, I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged.* Such charity is rarely unsuccessful in the business of persuasion. It is an excellent quality in a christian orator to know how to reach the hearts of his hearers. It is the part of a *teacher* to *inform* and *instruct* ; that of a *preacher* to *move* the *affections*, and engage them on the side of God and religion. This is not done by the *voice* and *gesture* alone ; but by the feelings of his own heart, and which he has the art to discover to his hearers. The preacher who does not feel what he delivers, will be always lifeless : An exhortation then, in order to its being *affecting*, must proceed from a heart which is itself affected.

I come in the third place to say that it is the duty of Ministers to devote themselves *wholly* to the work of the ministry. *Or ministry let us wait*
on

on our ministring. The word *wait*, indeed, is not in the original, but it is necessarily supplied to complete the sense. So that this passage in concurrence with many others, holds forth this truth very clearly, that the ministers of Christ, having a great work to discharge, should be unremitting in their attention to it. Hear what our Apostle says in other places relative to this very thing. Speaking to Timothy and in him to all successive pastors, he says, *give attendance to reading, to exhortation and to doctrine.* And again, *meditate on these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed to thyself and doctrine, continue in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.* These passages make it abundantly evident, that the work should absorb the whole time and attention of ministers; except so much as is necessary for relaxation, to prevent breaking the vigor of their minds and bodies in the prime of life. *Much study is a weariness to the flesh.* Amusements must be interposed. The text plainly holds forth the two following particulars.

1st. THAT they be not idle, negligent or unfaithful in the discharge of the duties of their office. Some assume the office and do not attend to the duties of it. Idleness is scandalous in persons of all professions, but especially in ministers. They ought to be diligent in their business, and fervent in the spirit.

2d. THE other thing the text requires is, that the preachers of the gospel should not divide their time between *this*, and any other employment. No *profession, trade, art or business*, should be permitted

permitted to engross their attention, or divert their minds from this sacred employment, which is weighty enough for the shoulders of Angels. To hold the *Hoe* or *Plow* in one hand, and *the sword of the spirit*; *the word of God*, in the other, is to make an inconsistent union of two opposite works, and going directly counter to the exhortation of the text. But how are ministers to be supported with their families, if they must not descend to any of the lucrative employments of the world. Our Saviour and his apostles have fully decided this matter, by shewing beyond all reasonable contradiction, *that the Labourer is worthy of his hire, and the workman of his meat; that they who wait at the altar, are partakers of the altar, and that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel; for so hath the Lord ordained.* This perhaps will be acknowledged by most men; but as to the mode of making this provision and securing this supply, people have different apprehensions. That it is a debt of justice was the opinion of the first settlers of this country, and must be conceded by all. But that the civil authority should interpose and oblige Societies to the discharge of it, by civil penalties, is a matter of dispute among many. For my own part, I think that a gospel minister, merely as such, should have no other law for his support but that of Christ. But when we consider that they are useful officers of State; and by pointing out and preaching up the duties of morality, they contribute to the *order, peace and welfare of Society*, and even supposing there were no future state, do eminent good to the world; we ought no more to object to there being provision made by *Law* for their support, than to provision made for any *civil magistrate or officer* whatever. On this foundation

foundation does civil government interpose to oblige societies to fulfil their contracts with their ministers, and on no other foundation is it defensible; for it is highly absurd for *civil authority*, in matters merely of religion and conscience, to make laws in affirmance of Law divine.

I M P R O V E M E N T.

THIS will be by inference and a practical address. And *first*, several important prerequisites are necessary to constitute an useful minister. As particularly, a good natural understanding, close application to study—and an honest heart. The first is a necessary foundation for all improvement; the *second* and *third* in order to their gaining a comprehensive knowledge of the scriptures which they are to teach to others. To set up a man for a teacher who through idleness or imbecility of understanding *needs himself to be taught which be the first principles of the oracles of God*, is contrary to every dictate of sound reason. It is of no importance *where* or *how* this Learning is obtained, whether at a *University, College, Academy, private School*, or within our own *domestick walls*. But it is *absolutely* necessary to acquit ourselves reputably in the discharge of the duties of the ministry. *The Priest's lips should preserve knowledge*. This was requisite in St. Paul's time, when miraculous gifts were prevalent, and must be much more so now, when they have entirely ceased. Ministers *should be Scribes well instructed to the kingdom of heaven*, resembling good householders, *bringing out of their treasures things new and old*.

AGAIN;

AGAIN ; an *honest disposition*, a *right temper*, a *sanctified heart*, are also necessary to make a good minister of Jesus Christ. Nothing makes a man an heretick so soon as a wicked heart. Wicked men hate the truth, and therefore they explain it away. An unholy temper warps the mind and fills it with prejudices. Practice in any profession makes perfect. David *had more understanding than all his teachers*. Why ? Because *he kept God's law*. *The wicked shall not understand, but the wise, or pious, shall understand*. *If any man will do God's will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether Christ spake of himself*.

2dly. Is exhortation part of a minister's duty ? Hence we learn that *prudence* is an important qualification in them. *They need to be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves*. Indeed, the same disposition which makes a man popular in the pulpit, exposes him to many *imprudences* ; therefore a wise and candid people will make suitable allowances. However, such persons ought to controul their natural disposition, and labour to conduct with a *decorum* becoming the *sacredness* of their character. They should particularly study the tempers of men, in order to know how to gain access to their hearts. No men need the knowledge of human nature so much as ministers. Without this their usefulness cannot be great, or of long continuance. St. Paul accommodated himself to *Jew and Gentile*, to the weak and strong, to the learned and ignorant ; *he became all things to all men, that he might gain some*. In a word ; this is a difficult part of a preacher's duty, and it requires great condescension, wisdom and address, to perform it aright.

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OTHER inferences might be drawn ; but I shall conclude with a few brief addresses. And the first is to you, Sir, the Pastor elect.

Persecuted in one city, you have according to the direction of our Saviour, fled to another. You have again undertaken a good, yet a laborious work, which will demand the most vigorous exertions both of body and mind. You are sent upon a most important errand, *even to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto the living God.* You know that many qualifications are necessary to furnish you for the great undertaking, that you may be the happy instrument of building up this people in knowledge and holiness. And though we hope, yea have reason to believe you are already furnished with many valuable accomplishments for the work into which you are about to re-enter ; yet you must be persuaded, considering the spaciousness of the field that opens before you, that you will stand in need of continual *accessions* of knowledge and prudence, and indeed of every ministerial grace and qualification. For this purpose give yourself to *reading, meditation and prayer.* The gospel is an inexhaustible treasury of wisdom and knowledge. Let this then be the matter of your daily perusal and attentive study ; *read it by day and meditate on it by night, that your profiting may appear to all.* The greatness of the work and the important charge which you will soon receive to fulfil it, I trust, will convince you that it is necessary to *wait upon it* and give yourself *wholly to it.* Be not entangled in the affairs of the world ; neither let the *deceitfulness of riches* divert you from the pursuit of more valuable objects. *Be instant in season and out of season.* Let no convenient

venient opportunity slip, either for communicating *instruction*, or administering *exhortation* or *reproof*. Remember that you are about to be placed in an eminent and conspicuous station, where your conduct will be particularly observed, and the eyes of mankind will be much upon you ; *take heed therefore to your steps*, keep your garments clean from stain of guilt and spot of sin. By the bright lustre of a virtuous example captivate the attention of others, and induce them to follow it. Convince your hearers that you believe the gospel, by living the doctrines you preach ; that so, *if they will not be won by the word, they may by your conversation, whilst they behold it to be chaste, and coupled with fear*. You are about to settle among a people where a diversity of sentiments and practice prevails in some points of religion ; wish not to bring them to your own opinion by any species of persecution, by any other *weapons* than those of *reason*, *argument* and *persuasion*. If you would make converts of them to your particular faith and persuasion, convince them from the scripture that your doctrines are *pure*, and your practice *apostolick*. Desire not to *compel* them to come in, that the house may be filled, by fire or faggot, but let them be allured to your assembly by the *clearness* of your teaching, and by the zeal of *pathetick exhortation*. If there should be any in this place, who by being *tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine*, have finally taken refuge in principles of infidelity, set before them the strong evidences of Christianity, and *be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope, or faith that is in you, with meekness and fear*. For the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men ; apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those those that

that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. Amidst these fatiguing labours, attend diligently to the state of religion in your own soul, and see that the life of God flourishes therein ; lest otherwise after you have preached to others, you yourself should be a cast away. Remember that we have this treasure in earthen vessels, which are liable constantly to be dashed to pieces, and as you are mortal as well as others, and the time of your usefulness may soon come to an end, may this cause you to work the work of him that sent you whilst it is day. Be thou faithful unto death and God shall give you a crown of life.

I TURN myself to the people of this Church and Congregation.

Dearly beloved. We are not unacquainted with the numerous misfortunes and disappointments you have experienced within the compass of a small number of years, by the removal of several of your Pastors, by death and otherwise, in a rapid succession. These things have been uncomfortable, and have had a tendency to dishearten and divide you. But we rejoice that notwithstanding these frowns of heaven upon you, your numbers are still *respectable*, and your resolution for having the ordinances of the Gospel statedly administered among you, *firm and well-established* ; for the enjoyment of which you have great advantages from your being able to transact your affairs in a *corporate capacity*.

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WITH the man of your choice we are *some* of us well acquainted, and though it has been his misfortune to pass through much *evil*, together with his *good report* ; yet we have no evil thing to say of him. Though he was deprived of the benefit of a publick education, yet by the blessing of God upon very valuable natural abilities, and a diligent cultivation of them under *private Preceptors*, we know him to be far from deserving the character of a *Novice* ; and believe him to be a *scribe well instructed to the kingdom of heaven, who will be able to feed you with knowledge and understanding, by bringing out of his treasure things new and old.* His disposition is *amiable and benevolent, generous and friendly* ; which will lead him, we trust, to *take the oversight of this flock of our Lord Jesus Christ, not by constraint, but willingly ; not for filthy lucre's sake, but of a ready mind ; and will induce him naturally to care for your state.* Behold the man. Receive him as an *ascension gift of Christ.* See that *he be with you without fear ; for he worketh the work of the Lord.* Attend diligently on his publick ministrations, and give him substantial evidences that *he does not labour in vain among you, nor spend his strength for nought.* Whilst he sows to you *spiritual things*, esteem it not a great matter that he should reap your *carnal things.* In this way, encourage him to the service of the Lord. Let him never want tokens of your friendship and regard. *Esteem him highly in love for his work's sake, and become not his enemy, because he tells you the truth.* Be tender of his reputation, and industriously ward off those pernicious stabs, which slanderous tongues may maliciously or wantonly aim at it. Be at peace among yourselves, and give him this evidence that

that you have heartily embraced and deeply imbibed the spirit of the gospel of peace. Give him ever a place in your prayers. In every address to the throne of grace, pray that the gospel, by him dispensed, *may run and be glorified; that he may be a burning and shining light in this golden candlestick; that you may long rejoice in his light,* and this *ancient Town* may have rest and be edified as in former times.

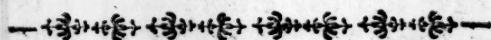
I shall conclude with a word to this assembly.

MY FRIENDS AND BRETHREN,

WE are all candidates for an eternal state of existence. According to the improvement of our present time and talents it will fare with us forever. By the gospel a price is put into our hands to get wisdom; and the ministers of Christ are sent ambassadors upon a treaty of peace *to beseech us to be reconciled to God.* Be thankful for these distinguishing privileges, and make a wise improvement of them, that so, when death shall close the present scene, and you shall no more compose assemblies here below, you may, through boundless grace in the REDEEMER, *be joined to the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in Heaven.*

A M E N.





THE CHARGE.

BY THE REV. DR. HOWARD,
OF BOSTON.

GOD, in his providence, having inclined you, Sir, to devote yourself to the work of the gospel-ministry and to take the pastoral care of the first congregational society of christians in this place, I am appointed, by the Presbytery joining in this solemnity, in conformity to the usual practice upon such occasions, to remind you in a summary way of the duties required of a christian minister, and admonish you to fulfil them.

THOUGH we claim no authority over you, nor suspect you to be unacquainted with the business of your office, yet that nothing may be wanting on our part to animate you to diligence and fidelity in it, you will suffer us in this public and solemn manner to exhort and charge you,

To take heed to the ministry which you have received of the Lord, that you fulfil it. Neglect not the gift of God which is in thee; but take care to cultivate and improve your intellectual faculties, by the acquisition of all kinds of useful knowledge; not for the sake of gratifying a vain curiosity, or making ostentation of your learning, but that you may be the better furnished for the good work to which you are called: And, that you may be a Scribe, well instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, we in a particular manner charge you to acquaint yourself intimately with those sacred oracles, which, it is your business to explain

explain and illustrate: That, being mighty in the Scriptures, you may by them be able to try doctrines and opinions, confute errors, put to silence gainfayers, and establish the truth as it is in Jesus upon a solid foundation.

TAKE heed to yourself, to your life and conversation. Let your temper and manners be regulated and governed by the gospel. It was a maxim with ancient pagans, that the accomplished orator must be a good man. Much more is this qualification necessary for the christian orator, whose chief business it is to persuade men to be holy, that they may be happy. Accordingly the apostle Paul says, A bishop *must be* blameless, vigilant, of good behaviour, not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of fordid gain, patient, not a brawler, not self-willed, not soon angry, in all things shewing himself a pattern of good works. Both the credit and success of his ministry in a great measure depend upon the goodness of his own heart and life. It is from the abundance of the heart, that the mouth speaketh: and when the heart is filled with the love of God and of holiness, the language will naturally be adapted to beget the same pious affection in others.

WE therefore, your brethren and fellow-servants, beseech and charge you, in the name of Christ, that you make it your great concern to feel the power and exemplify the practice of that godliness and virtue which you recommend to others; to resemble upon all occasions the holy Jesus, your Lord and ours, to whom we must one day give an account; particularly in that piety, humility and meekness, that charity, self-denial and simplicity which are so conspicuous in his example, and so
amiable

amiable in the eyes of God and man ; that so you may never be addressed with that confounding expostulation, Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself ?

TAKE heed to your doctrine : Let it be according to godliness, worthy of God, the fountain of truth and lover of holiness. You will remember that you are a minister of the gospel of peace, appointed in Christ's stead to beseech men to be reconciled unto God. You will not therefore teach for doctrines the commandments of men, but always endeavor to speak according to the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ. You will not handle the word of God deceitfully, or shun to declare whatever you shall judge profitable to your hearers, but teach them with the plainness and simplicity of a christian, what they must do to be saved, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. Remembering that Christ gave himself for us, that he might purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works, you will never represent him as teaching doctrines which tend to make men careless of good works, or which are inconsistent with the moral perfections of that God, whose messenger and prophet he was. Considering the gospel as designed for the instruction and salvation of sinners of all denominations and characters, you will not represent it as dark and unintelligible, to any who endeavor to understand it. While you inculcate the doctrines of the gospel with affection and earnestness, you will reason out of the scriptures to prove their truth ; and at the same time exhort your hearers to search and judge for themselves, what is right. You will warn the wicked, that he turn from his wickedness and live ; you will warn the righteous, that he

he turn not from his righteousness and die, that you may keep yourself pure from the blood of all men. You will endeavor to suit your ministrations to the various circumstances of your flock, feeding Christ's sheep, and feeding his lambs, that you may be a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, and both save yourself and them that hear you.

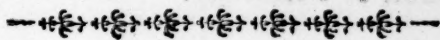
You will administer the sacraments of the gospel to proper subjects, explaining the nature, design and usefulness of them for promoting gospel obedience and true piety.

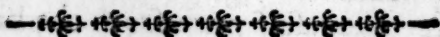
WHEN called in providence to that office, you will commit this ministry to faithful men; to such only as you shall have reason to think, will be good ministers of Jesus Christ.

You will give yourself to prayer, imploring wisdom and strength from Heaven for the discharge of your duty, and a blessing upon your labors to make them successful.

FINALLY, my brother, you will remember that you are to watch for souls, as one that must give account, and study above all things to shew yourself approved unto God, whose eye is ever upon you distinguishing with unerring certainty between a faithful and an unfaithful minister, that he may reward every one according to his works.

ANIMATED by these considerations, and guided, assisted and prospered in your ministerial labors, by the holy and good spirit of God, may you turn many to righteousness, and, when those that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, shine as a star, forever and ever. AMEN.





T H E
RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP,

GIVEN BY THE REV. DR. JOHN LATHROP,
OF BOSTON.

THE various Societies which have been established at different times, and in different parts of the world, have thought proper to institute some tokens, or particular ceremonies, by which the relation of such as were newly admitted was acknowledged, and by which they expressed their affection for each other.

SOME usages of this kind were adopted by the first ministers of Jesus Christ.—They not only admitted members to the visible kingdom of their divine Master, by the significant Rite of baptism, but when *they* who had received their commission from Christ himself, appointed others to take part with them in the work of the ministry, they not only gave them a solemn charge, but acknowledged them as fellow-labourers, and expressed their affection to them as Brethren, by giving them *the Right Hand of Fellowship*.

OUR pious ancestors who brought the Gospel with them from the other side of the ocean, and planted the christian church in this part of the world, made use of the same friendly token at the ordination of Ministers.

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To give a degree of uniformity to their proceedings, the churches of this country early formed a kind of ecclesiastical *confederacy*, and engaged with each other, that in their most important transactions, they would seek advice, and afford mutual assistance.

THIS confederacy is essential to the congregational plan of discipline, and distinguishes the churches of our denomination from those which are independent.

AGREEABLY to the constant usage of the churches at the ordination or instalment of a Minister, I am directed by the council convened on this occasion, to give you, dear Sir, *this right hand of fellowship*. It is not to be considered as *my* right hand, it is the right hand of the ministers, and of the churches who assist in your present settlement. By this token we acknowledge you a Brother, invested with all the powers and privileges, which may of right be claimed, or exercised, by a Minister of Jesus Christ. By this token we engage to treat you with all that affection and tenderness, which you may reasonably expect from christian brethren; and at the same time we let you know, that we shall expect returns of like affection and tenderness from you.

WE wish you, dear Brother, the constant aids of divine grace: May your ministerial course be long and successful: May you have many to be the seals of your ministry, and the crown of your rejoicing in the day of the Lord: Having turned many to righteousness may you shine as a star forever and ever.

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THE church of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the christian Society in this place will permit me to address a few words to them before I conclude.

DEARLY BELOVED,

WE sincerely congratulate you on this joyous occasion. The great head of the church hath been pleased to give you a Minister, who we trust will exert himself in all proper ways, to build you up in knowledge and holiness, unto eternal life.

PERMIT US to entreat of you, to encourage and strengthen the hands of your Pastor, by co-operating with him, to the utmost of your power, in the work, in which he is engaged: Harken with diligence and candor to the doctrines which he shall deliver, and so far as they appear to agree with the inspired writings, receive them, not as the doctrines of man, but as the doctrines of Christ. Teach your children by your own example, the importance of religious worship. In proportion as people neglect the regular and stated worship of God on the Sabbath, they will lose the sense of religion, which they may have contracted in early life, and sink into stupidity and barbarism.

WE pray a divine blessing may rest on you, and the man who hath now taken the charge of you in the Lord. May you and he, and may we all who have been witnesses to, or have assisted in the transactions of this day, join at last, the general Assembly and Church of the first-born, in ascribing blessing and praise and glory, to him who setteth on the throne, and to the Lamb of God, forever and ever. AMEN.



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